

Lansburgh's Department Store  
420-426 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

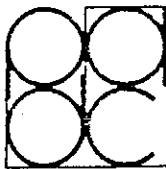
HABS No. DC-576

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
290-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

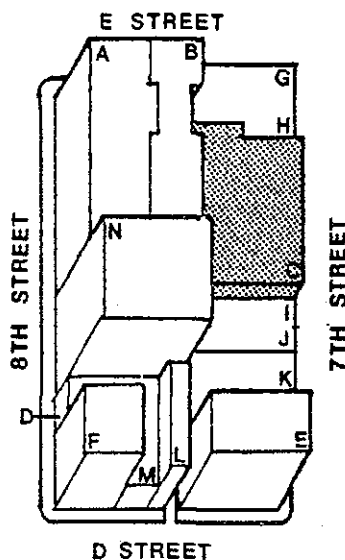
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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LANSBURGH'S DEPARTMENT STORE  
420-426 SEVENTH STREET, N.W.  
LOTS 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 431, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 431, see HABS No. DC-574.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Lansburgh & Brother Department Store at 418-430 7th Street, NW is made up of four separate buildings which have been united internally for over 100 years and externally by means of a common facade since 1940. The building occupies six city lots (all but the two northernmost lots of the northeast quadrant of square 431). The property commences about 75' from the northeast corner of the square and runs south for approximately 174'. It is 99'-2" in depth at its widest point. The two northernmost buildings are three stories in height while the remaining two buildings are four stories high. A basement runs under the entire four-building complex. The western (or rear) perimeter of this structure is connected to buildings erected in 1916 and 1924 which were built to augment the original 7th Street Lansburgh complex.

In the 1940s the four independent 7th Street buildings were united behind an Art Deco/Moderne Facade. Constructed of large blocks of Alabama limestone with a polished black granite base, the elevation is characterized by narrow vertical slits with recessed windows and spandrels. Its overall composition is asymmetrical and features a taller central portion which corresponds to the original 420-426 7th Street Lansburgh building. The ground floor of the building has large show windows flanking the entry doors to the department store. A reveal line separates the ground story from those above. The stone blocks of the upper stories are laid horizontally between the tall, narrow window bays. A single row of square panels runs directly above the window openings of the center bays. The shorter side bays have two rows of square panels above the windows. Two incised horizontal lines are above these rows of unadorned blocks, approximately 2' from the top of each bay. One final row of square panels forms the crowning course of the building.

The interior of the building is an open plan on all floors with structural columns and east-west walls defining the early organization of the four original buildings. The floor levels differ significantly between each building in the complex. All floors are internally connected to the 8th Street Lansburgh & Brother building by a 52" wide opening at the western end of 420 and 424 7th Street. An enclosed dogleg firestair is located in the northwest quadrant of the building in the first through fourth floors. The basement has an enclosed firestair to the first floor in the northeast corner of the building and a straight run stair in the southeast quadrant. 418 7th Street is separated from the other buildings on all floors by a bearing wall which is punctured in two places per floor for access to the remainder of the complex. 420-430 7th Street have been temporarily partitioned

into offices on the first and second floor. Party walls separate the buildings on the third floor. On the fourth floor, a wall divides 424 and 426 7th Street.

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The first element of the Lansburgh complex was 420-424 7th Street which was built in 1882, at a cost of \$30,000, to house the original Lansburgh & Brother Department Store. It was designed by the prominent Washington architectural firm of Cluss & Schulze. It was four stories in height with "Mansard, Romanesque, and Italianate styling, with intricate pressed brick and wood detailing" (Building Permit #940, 22 March 1882). This building was expanded one bay to the north in 1884 (Building Permit #100, 16 August 1884).

428 7th Street (c. 1855) was originally Harbaugh's Inn. In 1912 the party walls between 426 and 428 7th Street were removed. The interior of the building was renovated at the same time to annex the structure to the existing Lansburgh complex (Building Permit #6148, 24 June 1912). George S. Cooper was the architect of 430 7th Street (Building Permit #2077, 22 May 1888). In 1916 the brick walls between 428 and 430 7th Street were removed and replaced with steel columns and girders (Building Permit #899, 21 August 1916). 418 7th Street was the final addition to the Lansburgh & Brother 7th Street store when it was annexed in 1920. This building was built in 1863. An opening, with firedoors, was cut in the north wall of the building on the second and third floors to provide connections to 420 7th Street (Building Permit #6098, 1 May 1920).

In 1940, the 7th Street Lansburgh & Brother Building was united by its present Art Deco/Moderne facade which was designed by Porter & Locke Architects (Building Permit #231699, 25 April 1940 and Building Permit #230702, 25 March 1940). It is relatively stark and features few decorations.

#### SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

There is a pressed metal ceiling in the basement of 418 7th Street. It has a quatrefoil pattern with an imposed cross and decorative corner arabesque. Pressed metal ceiling, coves, and beam coverings are found on the first, third, and fourth floor ceilings. The ceiling tiles have a pattern of concentric squares. An egg and dart cove surrounds the perimeter of the space and follows the structural beams which are covered with a rubble relief. The central portion of the third floor has round, fluted cast iron columns with stylized leaf form capitals.



Seventh Street Facade (West)

Lot 14 (Sublots 808/809)  
428-430 7th Street

As platted by the Bastert and Enthoffer Map of the City of Washington (1872), Lot 14 was an "L-shaped" property which was situated in a northeastern section of the square.

1819.....Joseph Harbaugh owned Lot 14 until the 1870's.

1824.....The assessments were \$924.00 (lot) and \$2,500.00 (improvements).

1829/33

and

1844.....The lot value was \$1,540.00 while improvements were \$3,400.00.

1859.....The lot's value had increased substantially to \$7,700.00.

1870.....The value of improvements was \$6,000.00. At this point the tax records indicate north and south properties.

Lot 14 North (Sublot 808)  
430 7th Street

1872/73...The lot was owned by Solomon Fishman. It was assessed for \$8,196.00.

1877

to

1902.....S. Fishman & Son, sellers of hats, caps and furs, were established at this address.

1878/79

and

1883/84...The lot was owned by Solomon Fishman. It was assessed for \$8,196.00.

1883

to

1886.....A cigars/tobacco dealer, Edwin J. Mattern, was listed as tenant in the Directories.

1889

to

1894.....Thomas M. Talbott, a dentist, was occupant of 430 7th Street.

1893/94

and

1899/

1900.....Fishman's assessment increased to \$9,562.00 (lot). A \$4,000.00 improvement value was recorded.

1898

to

1903.....Another occupant in the building was Joannis J. Faber, a photographer.

1903

to

1912.....Emil West, a seller of men's furnishings, was listed in the Directories. The following year, Lansburgh's became the tenant.

Although the Lots 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813 (418-430 7th Street) remained as single subdivisions, they were united internally as Lansburgh & Brother Department Store over the past 100 years, and externally by means of a common facade in 1940. The property begins about 75' from the northeast corner of the square and runs south for approximately 174'. 99'-2" is its depth at the widest point. Numerous building permits document the changes chronologically:

- 1836.....At 426 7th Street, a new storefront with two show windows projecting 2' x 8" was installed under a May 5 Building Permit (#2138).
- 1887.....A July 18 Building Permit for 428 7th Street called for the projecting of show windows. (Building Permit #137. Cost: \$350.00.)
- 1888.....A brick building, 27'-3-1/2" x 30' x 45', was granted construction at 430 7th Street under a May 22, 1888 Building Permit (#2077). Architect: Cooper; Builder: C.V. Trott. Cost: \$10,000.00.
- 1892.....The extant storefront at 420 7th Street was to be rebuilt under a June 23 Building Permit (#2797). Cost: \$300.00.
- 1905.....A January 20 Building Permit (#1474) allowed the covering of one existing light well, 6'-6" x 18', using 2' x 12' VA joists - 16" o.c. at 426 7th Street.
- 1907.....#282 Permit granted the installation of new parts for old passenger elevator at 420-426 7th Street.
- 1912.....#6148 Permit called for the removal of party walls between 428 and 430 7th Street, thus adding the premises at 430 7th Street to 420-428 7th Street. Work involved new steel construction to be installed for support of existing floor construction. Also, new show windows contemplated; new elevator constructed. Building added to be renovated. Cost: \$3,800.00.
- 1914.....The Building Permit (#3310) of February 11 granted the removal of an extant brick wall on the fourth story between 424-426 7th Street, and to install fireproof columns and girders for support of approximately 6' of brickwork. New metal ceilings. Cost: \$3,800.00.
- 1915.....A January 8 Building Permit (#2770) was issued to erect storm windows and doors at 420 7th Street.
- 1916.....Included in the August 16 Building Permit (#899) was the removal of curtain brick walls and substitute columns and girders, construct a fireproof stairway, build ramps and steps and make other minor changes at 420-428 7th Street. Architect: Milburne & Hoister. Contractor: James L. Parson. Cost: \$15,000.00.



- 1919.....An April 2 Building Permit (#2826) granted the owner of 418 7th Street, Louis K. Ligett, Co., to remodel storefront, lay a new tile floor and make minor repairs. Architect: Charles H. Seynion.
- 1920.....Due to a May 1 Building Permit (\$6098) alterations to the structure included the cutting of an opening in the second floor (equipped with fire doors), to communicate with the second floor of 418 7th Street and likewise on the third floor. Architect: Lansburgh & Bro. Contractor: James L. Parsons, Jr. Cost: \$500.00.
- 1921.....Building Permit #6263 of April 6, reveals that James L. Parsons, Jr., contractor, was to close the center entrance on 7th Street and fill it in with show windows. Cost: \$1,000.00.
- 1940.....A January 19 Building Permit (#229,377) allowed the installation on the fourth, fifth, sixth floors and roof reinforced concrete slabs between the Busch building and main store.
- Further alterations included the projection of a stone facing 3" beyond the building line, and to repair the storefront (Building Permit #231,699, 4/25/1940).
- 1945.....Building Permit #275,661, January 24, granted the installation of fire doors and incinerator room and to build an 8' x 10' room in the enclosed areaway between the Busch building and main store. Cost: \$400.00.
- 1946.....A June 20 Building Permit (#286,467) granted a lintel be installed. Architects: DeYoung, Moscovitz & Rosenberg.
- 1948.....Building Permit #307,714 to make various alterations at a cost of \$50,000.00. Architects: DeYoung, Moscovitz & Rosenberg. Contractor: James L. Parsons, Jr.
- 1979  
to  
1981.....The structure has been occupied by the DC Foundation for Creative Space.

Lot 14 South (Sublot 809)  
428 7th Street

1872/73.....The southern property (23.8-1/4 frontage) was assessed to William Ballantyne, who retained his holding until the 1900's (tax assessment records). At this date, his assessment was \$14,904.00.

1875

to

1912.....The City Directories listed William Ballantyne, a stationer, as occupant of 428 7th Street.

1875

to

1888.....Calvin M. Parks, a patent agent, was also listed at 428 7th Street.

1878/79...The lot assessment was \$13,662.00.

1881

to

1906.....The City Directories listed Randall Parsons, a dentist, at this address.

1883/84...The lot was again assessed \$14,904.00.

1893/94...The assessed improvements were \$9,000.00, and the lot increased to \$17,388.00 in value.

1889/

1900.....Ballantyne's lot value diminished to \$14,904.00 even though the improvement value was \$7,000.00.

1913

to

1973.....Lansburgh's Department Store occupied the site during these years. Refer to Lot 14, "north", for additional information.

Lot 15 South (Sublot 811)  
422-424 7th Street

1819/44...George Sweeny was listed as owning the Lot 15 prior to its subdivision in the mid 1800's. The lot was assessed \$1,224.00 in 1824, and approximately \$2,000.00 in 1829-1833 and 1844.

1859.....Charles Kloman owned the property, which was assessed \$2,700.00.

1865

to

1882.....A harness maker K. Kneesi, was listed in the City Directories at 422 7th Street.

1870.....No owner was recorded. The total improvements were \$6,000.00. L. Fischer, a cutler, was established at 424 7th Street.

1872/73...Kloman's assessment substantially increased to \$16,200.00.

1876

to

1882.....C. Petersen, a jeweler, was located at 424 7th Street.

1877

to

1881.....Located at 424 7th Street was a photographer, P.H. Wheeler.

1878/79...The land dropped in value to \$14,850.00. The new owners were George H. Plant, trust Louise Kloman.

1883/84...The owners were unchanged and the assessments were relatively stable. Lansburgh's Department Store was established at 422-424 7th Street until 1973.

1893/94...Plant's and Kloman's land value had risen to \$18,900.00, with a \$25,000.00 improvement value.

1899/

1900.....The lot assessment dropped to \$16,200.00 even though a \$15,000.00 improvement assessment was recorded.

1900

to

1981.....Refer to Lot 14 north for additional information.

Lot 15 North (Sublot 810)  
426 7th Street

Lot 15, 51' frontage on 7th Street and 100' in depth, was subdivided into two lots, 810 and 811, in the mid 1800's.

1819.....George Sweeny was listed as owner. No lot assessment was recorded.

1824.....The assessment was \$1,224.00, to Sweeny.

1829/33

and

1844.....Sweeny's assessment was approximately \$2,000.00 during these years.

1859.....Francis Bell owned the building to the north. His assessment was \$2,400.00.

1867

to

1878.....Frederick Schmidt, a lawyer, was the tenant.

1870.....The improvement value was listed at \$9,000.00. No owner was mentioned. An insurance agent, F.A. Tucker, was the tenant until 1872.

1872/73...The lot, owned by Francis Prott, increased sharply in value to \$13,140.00.

1877

to

1883.....Francis Prott owned a shoestore at 426 7th Street, as listed in the City Directories.

1883/84...Prott's lot assessment increased marginally to \$14,334.00.

1885

to

1893.....The building at 426 7th Street had been occupied by Lansburgh's Department Store.

1893/94...The northern lot, now owned by John L. Vogt, achieved a value of \$16,723.00, and \$10,000.00 of improvements.

1899/

1900.....Vogt's assessment dropped to \$14,334.00, while the improvement value was unchanged.

Refer to Lot 14 "north" for further information.

Lot 15 Background

Plat Maps (Hopkins, 1892, Baists, 1903, 1919) do not diagram a background subdivision.

1872/73...A background property, owned by William Ballantyne, was assessed \$33.00.

1878/79...The background assessment increased to \$61.00.

1883/84...Francis Prott became the new owner of the background property. The lot value was \$66.00.

1893/94...An assessment of \$77.00 (lot) and \$5,000.00 (improvements) was in the name of John S. Vogt.

1899/

1900.....The land was assessed \$66.00, to Vogt.

1900  
to

1981.....Refer to Lot 14, "north", for additional information.

Lot 16 South (Sublot 813)  
418 7th Street

As platted by the 1892 Hopkins Plat Map, the lot was rectangular, and measured approximately 25' x 100'.

1819.....Charles Dent owned the south section of Lot 16.

1824.....The assessment was \$621.00.

1829/33...The lot was transferred in ownership to Jonathan Seaver. His lot value was \$1,034.00 with \$3,300.00 of improvements.

1844.....The tax assessment listings were unchanged.

1855.....Manhattan Life Insurance Co., and J.T. Stevens, lawyer, were located at the site.

1859.....The structure on the lot was assessed at \$5,174.00.

1862

to

1864.....Located in the building were two dentists, J. Hands and S. Erbach.

1870.....Improvements to the building were assessed for \$6,000.00.

1872/73...Seaver sold the southern property to John A. Angerman. The building was assessed \$17,522.00. Mrs. H.F. Wright, a physician, was occupant.

1878/79...Angerman's assessment decreased to \$14,229.00. A notions/fancy goods store, owned by J.E. Young, was listed in the City Directories.

1883/84...Angerman had transferred his title to George Ryneal, Jr. The building was assessed \$15,636.00. Ryneal sold artists materials at this location until 1894.

1893/94...The tax assessment book listed another increase in property assessment to \$18,242.00, while improvements were \$7,500.00 in cost.

1899/

1900.....RyNeal's assessment decreased to \$15,636.00.

1919.....The building was listed as vacant.

1920

to

1981.....See Lot 14, "north", for additional information on the Lansburgh complex  
and present tenant.

1924

to

1943.....Traveler and Thomas McAn shoe stores had been housed at 418 7th Street.

Lot 16 North (Sublot 812)  
420 7th Street

As platted by the 1892 Hopkins Plat Map, the lot was rectangular, and measured approximately 25' x 100'.

1819.....Mathias Keyne owned the north property.

1824.....Keyne's lot assessment was \$621.00, with improvements totalling \$300.00.

1829/33...The assessment increased to \$1,034.00 for the lot, \$200.00 for improvements.

1844.....The title was transferred to Leonard Harbaugh. The lot assessment was unchanged.

1859.....Again, a transfer of ownership occurred, giving Charles Duvall title of the property. His lot value was \$5,174.00.

1870.....Improvements totalled \$6,000.00. . .

1872/73...The new owner, Charles Kloman, was assessed \$17,522.00 for the lot.

1878/79...Now owned by George H. Plant, trust Louise Kloman, the lot value was \$14,229.00.

1883/84...The owner's assessment was \$15,408.00.

1893/94...The owners were unchanged. A \$5,000.00 increase in the lot assessment occurred.

1899/  
1900.....The lot assessment to Plant and Kloman dropped to \$15,408.00 even though improvements were \$11,000.00.

1913

to

1973.....Lansburgh & Bro., a department store, occupied the building. Refer to Lot 14 "north" for additional information.



## SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment  
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map